

# COMMUNITY ACTION FOR CHILDREN

## IN WARTIME

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
CHILDREN'S BUREAU

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#295

1. A well-baby clinic in every community
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### *Remember the Mother at Home*

Community action for children is community action for fathers and mothers. For the fathers who are at the front doing our fighting. For the mothers and fathers who leave home every day to do our war jobs. And for the mothers at home, too.

Mothers who work at home, building buoyant health and spirits in their children, are doing essential war work, just as surely as mothers who take jobs outside the home.

Communities have large responsibilities toward such mothers. Some of them need help in finding and holding on to decent living space for their families and playing space for their children. Some of them need help on their cost-of-living problems, if they are to forego the chance of adding to the family income by outside work. Some of them have too great a burden of work to carry and must have help with it if their children are not to suffer and their own health is to be kept sound. Some of them need help in getting the right kind of father-substitute for their children when fathers go to war. Some of them need help in learning reassuring answers to their children's wartime doubts and fears.

Give all these helps you can to your mothers at home, and above all give them community recognition for being what they are—war workers of the highest rank.

# COMMUNITY ACTION FOR CHILDREN IN WARTIME

— that they will be strong to carry forward a just and lasting peace.

Not one of our children is expendable, either in war or in peace. Whatever may happen to grown-ups, our children must be kept safe, strong, and assured.

Parents must be the first to shoulder that task. When they do a good job by their own children they are doing a vital war job for our Nation. And there's no care so good as the care that devoted parents can give at home.

But in war many parents, hard pressed by new responsibilities, need help. Not for themselves, but for their children.

Never have so many children depended on so many people for their chance to grow in safety, strength, and security.

This leaflet suggests the kind of help urgently needed for the children and youth of most communities right now. There are other responsibilities, too, which communities should assume toward their young citizens. Not all of the projects proposed are equally needed in every locality. The six suggested here, however, reach needs which are most common throughout our country.

Some communities are already at work. In others, one or another program is still to be started. No community can consider it has done its full wartime job if it leaves a single child whose mother is employed without good care, or any child without adequate health supervision, food, play, schooling, and work safeguards.

Your Government in Washington is working with you for the protection and upbuilding of your children. It cannot do the whole job. Your State government, too, has programs of action. But it cannot complete the task.

Our wartime job for children *can* be done when you and your neighbors get together and act as a community.

# 1. A well-baby clinic in every community.

## Why?

Because it is a wartime necessity to keep well children well, and that's what "well-baby clinics" help to do. Because the services of all doctors and nurses in wartime must be stretched to cover more people, and their time for home calls is very limited. Because many mothers cannot afford to engage physicians and nurses in private practice to keep a check on the health and growth of their children.

"Well-baby clinics", or child-health conferences should provide at least:

1. *A public-health nurse, to help at the clinic and to visit homes.*
2. *A physician, with time enough to examine each child at least once a month and to talk with the mother about the child's food and care.*
3. *A place, which mothers, babies, doctor, and nurse can conveniently reach, and which is adequate in size to accommodate everyone.*
4. *Simple equipment and supplies, needed by the doctor and nurse, as they suggest.*

You can get information about this program from your local and State departments of health, and from these:

"Child-Health Conference," Publication No. 261, and "Facts About Child Health," also a publication of the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. Free. A film on the child-health conference is available on loan.

## 2. Care for children of employed mothers

**Why?** Because no child whose mother must work outside the home should be allowed to suffer from the loss of her time and attention. Because many working mothers are unable to provide the right kind of care for their children while they are at work. Because community facilities for caring for children must be multiplied to cover many more children. Because mothers work best when they are sure their children are well cared for.

Programs for children of employed mothers should provide:

1. *Planning with War Manpower Agencies—to see that mothers of young children are not recruited unless all other sources of labor supply are exhausted.*
2. *Counseling and information service.*
3. *Nursery schools or day-care centers.*
4. *Before and after school programs for school-age children.*
5. *Foster-family day care.*
6. *Supervised homemaker services for children who are ill or who should be cared for within their own homes.*
7. *Health supervision for all children under these programs.*

You can get information on this program from your local and State departments of welfare and education, and from these:

"A Community Program of Day Care for Children of Mothers Employed in Defense Areas," and "Standards of Day Care for Children of Working Mothers," publications of the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. Free. Also ask the Bureau for a copy of the War Manpower Commission's "Policy on Employment in Industry of Women With Young Children."

"School Children and the War Series," Leaflets 1, 2, 3. Publications of the U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency. (Each leaflet, 5c. Order only from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.)



### 3. School lunches in every school

**Why?** Because only well-fed children can take full advantage of school opportunities. Because, with more and more grown-ups working away from home, more children must stay at school for lunch. Because many children can neither bring an adequate lunch with them nor buy one. Because school lunches are one of the best ways to safeguard the health of children.

School lunch programs should provide at least:

1. *Food that is nourishing and that makes up for the lacks in the rest of the day's meals. Something hot makes a school lunch more satisfying. Milk is essential.*
2. *A cheerful, clean place, and time enough for eating this lunch.*
3. *Equal consideration for all children eating together, with no distinction between those whose parents can pay and those who cannot.*
4. *Information on good meals, given so simply that children will learn and will carry the information home.*

You can get information about this program from your local school principal or superintendent, your local nutrition committee, and the nearest office of the Food Distribution Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture. (For the address get in touch with your local defense council.) These will help you, too:

"The Road to Good Nutrition." Publication No. 270 of the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C. Free.

"School Lunches and Education." Publication of the U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C. (5c. Order only from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.)

## 4. Schooling for every child

### Why?

Because the job of winning the war and of rebuilding the world when war is won imposes on us a greater responsibility than we have ever had before to assure every child the best education possible. Because school days lost now may mean a permanent loss. Because the development of young minds and bodies can best be watched over if children attend school regularly. Because it is difficult for children who leave school for work to return to it in later years. Because our children must be protected from unreasonable demands for their labor.

Community provision for schooling should include at least:

- 1. School buildings and equipment available for every child of school age, without discrimination based on race, permanency of residence, or social status.*
- 2. Enough qualified teachers and other school staff to assure every child a well-rounded school experience.*
- 3. Sound policies, strictly enforced, controlling release from school attendance and readjustments of program to avoid shortening of terms.*
- 4. Guidance and health services, especially those preparing the child for entrance into employment.*

You can get information about this program from your local school principal or superintendent and your State departments of education and health.

The Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., will be glad to give you information on school attendance in relation to employment.

The U. S. Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Washington, D. C., will be glad to give you information on wartime programs of education.

## 5. Play and recreation programs in every community

**Why?** Because learning how to play wisely makes for wholesome living. Because overcrowding at home and in the community often deprives children of any place to play. Because more parents must leave home to work, and longer hours at work keep more parents from sharing in their children's recreation. Because boys and girls whose school life is being shortened and whose work responsibilities are being stepped up need more wholesome leisure-time opportunities.

A play and recreation program should provide at least:

1. *A place, equipment, and supervision for active games, and for quiet play, dramatics, arts, crafts, music.*
2. *A place and sympathetic adult supervision for boy and girl companionship.*
3. *Community control of the kinds and quality of commercial recreation facilities.*
4. *Special leadership and guidance for children with special problems.*

You can get information about this program from your city recreation department, or council of social agencies, or war recreation committee of your local defense council.

The Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, and the Recreation Section, Office of Defense Health and Welfare Services, will be glad to direct you to agencies that can help you with your special wartime recreational problems. The Children's Bureau publications on youth in wartime (free) and "Handbook for Recreation Leaders" (No. 231. 20¢. Order only from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.) will also help. And this:

"Volunteers in Recreation." Publication of the U. S. Office of Civilian Defense, Washington, D. C. Free.



## 6. Employment safeguards for every boy and girl

**Why?** Because their eagerness to be doing war work and earning their own money is attracting more and more boys and girls into jobs, both part-time and full-time. Because the pressure for wartime production often obscures the long-time danger in lowering work standards for youth. Because long hours and other bad working conditions are harmful to their health. Because inexperienced boys and girls do not know how to protect themselves.

Programs to safeguard working boys and girls should provide:

1. *Continuing publicity on employment standards relating to ages, hours, and working conditions for young people, and on jobs best suited for youth.*
2. *Counseling and placement services to help boys and girls decide whether to leave school for work, and to find suitable part-time or full-time jobs.*
3. *Adequate staff for prompt issuance of employment and age certificates, to make sure no child under legal working age goes to work.*
4. *Health services, where young persons going to work can be examined to make sure they are physically fit for the job.*

You can get information about this program from your local school superintendent, the local office of the United States Employment Service, and your State department of labor.

The Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., will be glad to give you information on legal standards and wartime policies on the employment of youth as they apply in your community and to send you: "Wartime Employment of Boys and Girls Under 18."

# GEARING FOR ACTION

— children can't wait for war to be won. Right now they need your help.

Of course you want these programs for your community, but they won't get started just by wanting. Responsibility for starting them and keeping them humming must be placed on some community group.

Such a group may already be in existence in your community. There may be a committee concerned with children attached to your local defense council. If not, it may be your opportunity to assist your defense council in organizing such a committee. Work through your local council, if possible, as this machinery has been set up to enable citizens together to plan for the protection and welfare of the civilian population in wartime. There may also be a council of social agencies to which you can turn for guidance.

Whatever committee assumes the job, it should represent every interest concerned with children in the community: local departments of health, welfare, and education; public employment offices; parent-teacher associations; children's and youth-serving agencies; labor and employer groups; farm organizations; religious, racial, and citizen groups.

Specific responsibility should be assigned to the chairman, secretary, and to subcommittees.

Every committee has its own way of working, but a first job for a beginning committee is to find out what similar groups in other communities are doing for their children in wartime; what help can be had from Federal and State Governments.

Then comes exploration on the home grounds. Your committee will drive ahead faster if it knows: (a) how much of the need for the program given here is now being met, and by whom; (b) how much of the need is not being met; (c) what it would take in funds, personnel, and time to meet that need 100 percent; and (d) how far toward a 100 percent goal your community can go within the next year.

Next come the blueprints. Draft the course you are going to take, defining clearly who will be responsible for what, and when and how each one will work.

Now comes the work. Remember, as you move ahead, all of you are working for the community, so let it know your plans and your progress. Keep your news flowing out through every useful channel. In many communities the war-information committee of the defense council can help plan a program of public understanding of needs and rally public support, through the press and radio, through Victory Speakers, and in planning for discussion groups.

It is well to start early to think of the volunteer help each project will require. Plan and provide for training volunteers. Check first at the volunteer office of your defense council for volunteers and training courses.

Neither from your own operations, nor in the minds of the families you are attempting to help, let it ever be truthfully said that you are working behind a barrier of prejudice toward the children of any nationality, color, or creed.

Even when you get all six programs running along in high gear you may not be giving all your community's children all the help they need in wartime. Every locality has its special concerns. No one plan of action, designed at long distance, can fit or foresee every local need.

All over the country, communities like yours will be gearing for action with you. The Children's Bureau Commission on Children in Wartime is at work on national policies and programs. It has drawn up a "Children's Charter in Wartime" that marks the goals the Nation should aim at. It has drafted a "Program of State Action," which has gone out far and wide. And now, with this suggested program of local action, it urges you to join forces in the greatest effort ever undertaken to assure all our children safety, strength, and security now, so that when they are grown they will be the better able to work with us in making our dreams for democracy come true.

You are invited to send to the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., for free copies of the "Children's Charter in Wartime," "Program of State Action," and a newly published handbook on "Standards of Child Health, Education, and Social Welfare," Bureau Publication No. 287.

**This plan for local action to meet the wartime needs of our children has been adopted by the Children's Bureau Commission on Children in Wartime. It is addressed to every citizen who wishes to join with others to conserve, equip, and free children of every race and creed to take their part in democracy.**



**U. S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR**  
**Frances Perkins, Secretary**

**CHILDREN'S BUREAU**  
**Katharine F. Lenroot, Chief**

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